

Message Text

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64

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CIEP-02 SPC-03 STR-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7966

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, EEC, UK

SUBJECT: EC REGIONAL POLICY

REF: EC BRUSSELS 940

1. THE UK WELCOMES THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE SPECIAL FEBRUARY 18 EC COUNCIL MEETING ON REGIONAL POLICY, WHICH WOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE MIDST OF THE BRITISH ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

2. ACCORDING TO ROBIN O'NEILL (ASSISTANT SECRETARY, CABINET OFFICE), IT BECAME CLEAR TOWARD THE END OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LAST WEEK THAT THE IMPASSE OVER THE SIZE OF THE

REGIONAL FUND WAS NOT GOING TO BE BROKEN AT THE FEBRUARY 18 MEETING. THE NINE THEREFORE REACHED A GENERAL CONSENSUS IN FAVOR OF POSTPONEMENT, AND THE UK GLADLY WENT ALONG. WITH EC MEMBERSHIP A CAMPAIGN ISSUE, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SEES NO VALUE IN SENDING A MINISTER TO BRUSSELS NEXT WEEK KNOWING THAT HE WILL RETURN EMPTY-HANDED.

3. O'NEILL SEES NO CRISIS OVER REGIONAL POLICY AT THIS TIME. THE GERMANS, BRITISH AND FRENCH ARE STICKING BY THEIR POSITIONS, WHILE THE COMMISSION WORKS ON POSSIBLE COMOROMISES. O'NEILL EXPECTS THAT THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE UP REGIONAL POLICY AGAIN IN MARCH. EVEN IF THE CONSERVATIVES ARE RETURNED TO POWER ON FEBRUARY 28, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MAY STILL BE IN THE PROCESS OF REORGANIZING ITSELF AT THE TIME OF THE MARCH 4-5 COUNCIL. THE UK MIGHT PREFER TO SCHEDULE A SPECIAL ONE-DAY MEETING ON REGIONAL POLICY SOMETIME LATER IN THE MONTH.

ANNENBERG

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